

FAREWELL IMPRESSIONS OF
PERSIA

IN the letters by which this chapter is preceded few general opinions have been expressed on Persia, its government, and its people, but now that I contemplate them with some regard to perspective, and have reversed some of my earlier and hastier judgments, I will, with the reader's permission, give some of the impressions formed during a journey extending over nine months, chiefly in the western and south-western portions of the Empire.

On the pillared plain of Persepolis, on the bull-flanked portals which tower above the Hall of Xerxes, the Palace of Darius, and the stairways with the sculptured bas-reliefs, which portray the magnificence, the military triumphs, and the religious ceremonial of the greatest of the Persian monarchs, runs the stately inscription: "I am Xerxes the King, the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of the many-peopled countries, the Upholder of the Great World, the son of Darius the King, the Achsemenian " ; and on the tablets on the rock of Besitun is inscribed in language as august the claim of Darius the Mede to a dominion which in his day was regarded as nearly universal.

The twenty-four centuries which have passed since

these claims were made have seen the ruin,
of the Palace-
Temples of Persepolis, the triumph of Islam
over Zoro-
astrianism, the devastating sweep of the
hordes of Taimur-